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S E C R E T MANILA 003790

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STATE FOR S/CT AND EAP/MTS
USPACOM ALSO FOR FPA HUSO
SECDEF/OSD/ISA/AP (LAWLESS/TOOLAN/BAILEY)
JS/J5 (WILKES/ROBINSON/CLEMMONS)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2016
TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 8 UPDATE ON JOLO OPERATIONS

REF: A. MANILA 3670
[1](#)B. MANILA 3560
[1](#)C. MANILA 3401
[1](#)D. MANILA 3352
[1](#)E. MANILA 3299
[1](#)F. MANILA 3218

Classified By: (U) Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Paul W. Jones
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) The Armed Forces of the Philippines continues to track fleeing Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leaders in the fifth week of its operation to capture or kill the terrorist leadership on the island of Jolo. Philippine Marines suffered six killed and 20 wounded in an encounter with ASG elements in the vicinity of Patikul in central Jolo on September 4, while two members of the US-trained Light Reaction Company (LRC) were killed and five wounded in a September 7 clash with the ASG on Mount Tukay in the southwestern corner of the island. There are no accurate reports of ASG casualties, although the AFP believes at least an equal number of terrorists were killed in the fighting, which took place in close quarters.

[1](#)2. (S) Khadaffy Janjalani, Umar Patek, and Dulmatin are believed to be in the Patikul area within the traditional stronghold of ASG Commander Radulan Sahiron. Abu Sulaiman has split off from the group and is thought to be in the vicinity of Jolo City. Philippine Naval Special Operations Units are staged to seize Sulaiman once his location can be precisely identified.

[1](#)3. (C) An LRC early morning raid on a safe house in Jolo City September 5 netted two Filipino nationals with false Malaysian and Indonesian identification. The two individuals, who are now undergoing interrogation, are believed to be members of Abu Sulaiman's logistics network. FBI agents assigned to JSOTF helped with site exploitation and examination of the documents and cell phones seized during the raid. They are also examining the material recovered after the September 7 clash on Mount Tukay, which includes operational manuals.

[1](#)4. (C) US Navy ships and aircraft continue to support the Philippine maritime cordon around Jolo. The Philippine Navy (PN) has conducted 1259 interdictions since the start of "Operation Ultimatum" on August 1. The USNS Stockham, which arrived off Jolo September 7, helped the PN with maintenance on two of their light patrol craft, enabling them to sustain operations.

15. (C) Brigadier General Ruben Rafael, the new Task Force Comet Commander who took command on September 4, appears to be an aggressive officer, quick to react to actionable intelligence. He has asked for additional staff from SOUTHCOM to help him conduct rapid planning.

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Jones